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About the Journal

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work's annual publication, *Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR)*, showcases peer reviewed undergraduate research from social work and related disciplines that contribute to the advancement of social and economic justice.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Dean Steven Anderson for supporting our efforts to continue publishing undergraduate student's original work in the Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR). We also thank the School of Social Work faculty for the encouragement they extended to the authors of the JUSWR 4th issue. We further wish to acknowledge and extend a very special thanks to Dr. Çağlayan Başer, Dr. Janet Carter-Black, Dr. Kelly Clary, Dr. Rachel Garthe, Dr. Jacob Goffnett, Aleena Khan, Esther Shin, Dr. Kevin Tan, and Dr. Kate Wegmann for their extraordinary mentoring, guidance, and support on behalf of the student authors.

Dr. Rachel Garthe took over the helm as Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator for the 2019-20 academic year. She brought her enthusiasm and her extensive knowledge of research to our advisory board. We are grateful for her expertise and guidance, and also for her steady support as we made the shift from in-person training to virtual training.

Last, but far from least, the JUSWR Advisory Board and Senior Editor wish to express our pride and gratitude for the tremendous efforts made by our JUSWR peer editors. These stellar students understood they were making a commitment: to participate in mandatory training, to review materials, and to offer viable, supportive recommendations to the student authors. We especially are grateful for your flexibility and dedication as we transitioned to an all-virtual format. Well done!

Staff

Dear Reader:

I am thrilled to welcome you to the fourth volume of the Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR). The JUSWR is a result of a highly collaborative effort between students, faculty, and staff. Undergraduate peer editors were instrumental in the selecting, editing, and submitting recommendations for research and creative pieces to be accepted for publication. These undergraduate peer editors worked closely with the Senior Editor, Rebecca Dohleman Hawley, who did an outstanding job providing feedback, guidance, and prowess throughout the entire publication process. This journal would not be possible without Rebecca and her instrumental leadership. In addition to the work of the undergraduate peer editors and senior editor, faculty members also generously mentored their students in the writing and publication processes, of which we are grateful for their time and energy. Fellow Advisory Board Member, Dr. Jan Carter-Black, provided the team with exceptional guidance and feedback. As the Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator for the School of Social Work and Advisory Board Member of the JUSWR, I approached my role with commitment and enthusiasm, assisting with the peer editor training and editing process. Together, this collaborative team proudly brings you the fourth volume of the JUSWR.

The JUSWR was published for the first time in the spring of 2017 and each year sees an increase in submissions, pieces, and readers. Last year, JUSWR Volume 3 was split into two issues to accommodate the number of excellent pieces submitted. We are proud to announce that this year, Volume 4 will also consist of two issues. The current issue, Volume 4 Issue 1, will be available in September, and Volume 4 Issue 2 will be available in December. This Volume includes pieces from Social Work and Political Science undergraduate students. Topics range from mental health, safety, and social-emotional needs among middle and high school students, substance abuse in the military, immigration, segregation and Black poverty, identity, and balancing work and family. These pieces include research posters and papers, opinion pieces, and dance and poetry pieces.

As the new Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator for the School of Social Work, I am honored to join such a remarkable editorial team and direct undergraduate research efforts. The JUSWR originated with the aim of supporting undergraduate research and scholarly work, becoming a platform for students to disseminate their findings and work. Some of the ways students can become involved in research at the School of Social Work include: 1) participating as a Research Assistant to a faculty-directed research project, or 2) leading their own area of research with an Independent Study or Project. Students can find more information about these opportunities in the Course Catalog (SOCW 310, 418, and 480). It is from these projects that many students submit posters and papers to the JUSWR or present at the University of Illinois Undergraduate Research Symposium. Other research opportunities include authoring or co-authoring research papers and presentations for peer-reviewed journals and academic conferences, serving as a peer editor for the JUSWR, or pursuing the Undergraduate Research Certificate Program offered by the Office of Undergraduate Research.

In addition to research, the JUSWR also accepts original creative pieces for publication. These creative pieces may reflect aspects of students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, or perspectives. The JUSWR also considers an array of pieces in addition to research, including policy briefs, class papers, and opinion pieces. As you flip through the current and previous issues of the JUSWR, you will see a glimpse into the knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, and thoughtfulness of the authors across these diverse platforms. Students make contributions that advance social and economic justice, further enhancing their own and their readers' appreciation toward our diverse and constantly evolving social world.

I am please to announce the first issue of the fourth volume of the JUSWR. This publication provides clear and compelling evidence of the high quality of undergraduate social work research and creative works that contribute to knowledge permeating the School of Social Work and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Sincerely,
Rachel Garthe, PhD
Assistant Professor & Undergraduate Research Program Coordinator
School of Social Work

Informational Article

Create Boundaries Between Work and Homelife

Krishna K. Patel, BSW

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

Transitioning to working from home can be challenging and difficult to adjust, especially if it is continuous and constantly clashing with your personal life and your family life. If this is not your norm, then you may see some problems arise in your day-to-day work life such as loud noises in the background, interruptions while on an important phone call for work, boundary and space issues if you are sharing a workspace, and more. Some tips and suggestions mentioned are being proactive about your work situation, taking frequent breaks throughout the workday, a breathing exercise method, and reflecting on your complete workday experience. Allowing yourself to do the things mentioned in this article will ease up your day and provide an overall less stressful environment in your home.

Keywords: Boundaries, Decompress, Home Life, Schedule, and Work.

Create Boundaries Between Work and Homelife

The effects of not having enough time to decompress and having no separation between your work and family life can vary from person to person. On top of that, if you are not used to working from home, it can easily become challenging and difficult to adjust to. When this occurs, it can create a stressful environment for you and anyone else around you. It is important to create boundaries for yourself to avoid letting stress build up inside of you.

Here are some tips on how you can create a boundary between your work, family, and self-care to ease the transition of working at home.

- Designate one spot in your home as your work area. In this area, create an environment in which you can focus on your work and other priorities, and try to devote this place for work only. By creating a work-only space, this allows you to decompress in other areas of your home without thinking about work.
- You might have to share your workspace with someone else. If that is the case, create a schedule for the space or work out a plan for sharing and dividing the space. This will help keep everything a bit more organized.

- Create and set boundaries with your children or family. Let them know when you are in your workspace, you cannot have any interruptions unless it is an emergency.
- If you are working from home with other people around, have a conversation with them. Talk to them about what you need from them to make it work. If you prefer a quieter work environment, make sure to mention that.
- Be proactive. If you already know your schedule for the day, inform those around you or in your home. Make them aware of times you absolutely may not be disturbed. For example, if you have an important meeting that requires 100% of your focus and attention, let the people around you know what time the meeting starts and ends so you have no unnecessary distractions.
- Take frequent 5-10-minute breaks throughout the day. Whether it be from your work or from your family, give yourself time and space away to clear your mind.

According to research done by the American Psychiatric Association, "regularly detaching from your work tasks—both during the workday and in your off-hours—can help restore energy in the short term and prevent burnout in the long term. Much like regular exercise and sleep, work breaks function both as prevention and intervention," says Charlotte Fritz, PhD, associate professor, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Portland State University. "Taking regular breaks helps us to be more resilient when stressors arise, and they function as an intervention to help us deal with the daily grind" (Weir 2019).

- After your workday is over, decompress for 10-15 minutes in your work area before you see your family and kids. One way to do so is to just sit and relax for a few moments and do breathing exercises or meditation. The University of Michigan Medicine suggests doing belly breathing as it "is easy to do and very relaxing" (2019). To do this exercise, follow these six simple steps:

    1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
    2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
    3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
    4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in and use it to push all the air out.

5. Do this breathing three to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.

6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

- Create a schedule for yourself to follow during the day. While doing so, make sure to allow yourself to have about 15-20 minutes in the morning to wake up before jumping right into work. When you are done with work, you should be done with work for the rest of the day. Going back to work after your workday has finished can take over any personal time you have.
- Give yourself 2-3 reachable goals throughout the day, but don't beat yourself up over not accomplishing these goals. For example, if you have 10 client cases to work on throughout your five-day workweek, set a goal of working on two clients each day. This way, you will not overwork yourself or your brain. By setting goals, you are also setting boundaries for yourself because you are forcing yourself to stay focused on what you need to do to reach these goals.
- Reflect on your workday before regrouping. For instance, Fred Coon, CEO of Stewart, Cooper & Coon, A Human Capital Strategies Firm, suggests "recognizing what went well for you, looking for areas where you can improve, and identifying the best part of your day." Studies done by Harvard Business School tested "whether taking 15 minutes at the end of a workday to reflect on that day's work improved their performance and found the participants tasked with daily written reflection did 22.8% better on an assessment than the control group" (Di Stefano, Gino, et. Al., 2016). This is a great way to prevent mixing your work life with your personal life, and it gives you the chance to enhance your mood.
- If a busier workday is expected, set aside 1-3 main goals to achieve for the workday. If you achieve these goals, you are more likely to feel accomplished when you reflect on your day.
- Find an activity that you are passionate about or have not done in a while. When you do this, you can escape into your own world and you will find that you are calmer and more relaxed and ready to do the next thing after your workday is over.

Journalist Diana Raab is an expert in helping others transform and become empowered through creativity. She believes that "[the desire to escape] can also be a temporary way to withdraw from life's stressors and challenges, whether it is looking after a family or navigating health challenges. The escape method you choose will depend on the reason you wish to escape, what you are escaping from, and the results you would like to achieve" (2018). Remember to give your mind time to withdraw from life's stressors and challenges. Your mental health matters.

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Creative Expressions

Critical Thinking Forum
Creative Expressions

From the editor:
Critical Thinking Forums give students the opportunity to consider and process rather dense course content through creative expression. Family trees, collages, analysis of existing or creating original song lyrics, poetry, videos, and various other art forms are welcomed. The one caveat is the creative piece must reflect some aspect of the student's lived experience as a member of a particular or combination of their multiple intersecting identities. Students are also required to submit a written description or reflection that addresses the relationship between their chosen creative piece and topics covered in a specific course. Some descriptions discuss the evolution of a student's thought processes, factors that have influenced their core beliefs, and values about how the world *should* be and what they *should* expect from said world, as well as issues they are still striving to reconcile that are related to the specific issues conveyed in their creative work.

Note to the reader: Expletives associated with a particular identity group are included. However, such words must have an expressive and substantive purpose. The inclusion of potentially offensive words for entertainment or mere shock value is forbidden.

Immigrant Child

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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Reflections from the Author

I created the poem *Immigrant Child* with the intent to show the feelings and emotions that took place when I moved from Bulgaria to America as an 8-year-old girl. I was placed in the 3rd grade without knowing any English – not even a word. Having always been very shy and timid, I was too afraid to speak to anyone in English for a whole year. However, I quickly picked up on the language and would understand everything that was said to me and about me. The kids and teachers thought I was weird and did not like me much since I did not bond with them in any way. I felt like I was othered when I would hear them talk to each other about me in many inconsiderate ways. They never knew the truth about where I came from and who I was before I immigrated. Instead, I would hear everyone around me making assumptions about me, my country, and my culture. I felt as if my ethnicity had become stigmatized at my school, since everyone would just treat me strangely and talk about how I was Bulgarian and unfortunate. This took a toll on me, and after a year of not being able to blend in with my peers, I decided to start making changes.

During my second year in America, I went through behavioral acculturation. I began speaking English, became accustomed to American humor, learned how people like being treated and spoken to, and made friends. The more I changed my behavior to fit with the social norms of American culture, the more I became liked by my peers and my teachers. I went from being an unfortunate immigrant child to a bright and friendly young girl. I became one of them and was no longer othered as much as I used to be before my behavioral acculturation. As the years passed, I acculturated psychologically as well. I adopted progressive American ideologies about common controversial topics such as gender norms and standards. I complied with what should be considered ideal and frowned upon behaviors and beliefs – even if they conflicted with Bulgarian views.

I visited Bulgaria every summer and stayed with my grandparents up until the end of 7th grade. Every time I went back, I would experience strong enculturation and my connection to my ethnicity would spark up again and grow stronger after having weakened while in America. I became better at speaking, reading, and writing Bulgarian. I would fall in love with Bulgarian music and art all over again. I would want to stay home and felt like I belonged in ways that I could never in America. However, home had now become America as well, so I would return and lose the connection to Bulgarian culture and the feelings of belonging there quickly. I have not returned to my homeland in nearly 10 long years. During those 10 years, I have gradually lost touch with my Bulgarian culture and strengthened my American way of living life. I look forward to going back and going through the enculturation process again.

Keywords: Immigration, Enculturation, Acculturation, Child, Culture

Immigrant Child

I remember coming to America
I remember being scared
Not knowing English,
To speak, I never dared.

I was eight years old
I wanted to fit in, oh how much I cared
But the treatment from my teachers was so cold
They didn't like me because I was different.

Many eyes, lots of stares
I'd hear my peers talk about me like I wasn't even there
They thought I couldn't understand
They'd talk about how I come from a foreign land.

In their eyes I wasn't one of them,
I was someone strange
I knew I had to change
Acculturation was the key,
Instead of "me and them" it now became "we".

I started fitting in
Decided to embrace the culture on a whim
When my own I started to forget,
The more American I'd get.

This is Me

Saheli Sheth, BS

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Reflections from the Author

A summer afternoon 15 years ago. Five friends with nothing better to do, and an aunt's upcoming baby shower – the recipe for what would turn into one of my life's biggest passions. Many Indian girls are introduced to dance early on in their lives. On this summer afternoon 15 years ago, an aunt had requested performances for her baby shower. We started with our moms choreographing our dances for us while we complained about how traditional the steps were. As we grew and learned how to dance for ourselves, our dance styles fused—a combination of what our moms had taught us and what we had learned for ourselves from living in America. This reflects the recently unearthed concept of the "hyphenated American," as many children of immigrants find that hyphens describe their identities: Mexican-American, Japanese-American, Italian-American, for example. We, too, became the hyphen: the hyphen in between Indian-American, and in this case, the hyphen in between Bollywood-Hip Hop.

As I am typing this paper, I realize that Microsoft Word does not recognize me[1]. It tells me I should "remove the unnecessary hyphen" between "Indian" and "American," and although I realize it does not mean this as a microaggression, it shows even our technology has been systemized to invalidate certain identities. For example, let us say I type "Saheli"—a beautiful Hindi word meaning "friend," a name with which my parents lovingly gifted me, a name just as valid as "Sam" or "John" or "Alex"—on a computer. I will be welcomed with that all-too-familiar little red squiggly line under my name. *You are wrong. You made a mistake. Try again.*

I can click the option "Ignore Once," breathe in, breathe out, and let it go—just as I can do with any microaggression against my identity. However, that just means the action—the microaggression, or the red squiggly line—will occur again and again. So instead, I decide to educate Microsoft and click "Add to Dictionary," and my name, my female Indian name, is finally accepted by a program created by an older-aged white man. And could you imagine? I type my name again, and again, and again, but the red squiggly line never comes back.

This is not assimilation, as I am holding on to my Indian identity. Rather, I am ensuring my Indian identity is accepted by Americans, those who identify with the dominant paradigm. That is exactly what I did with dance. If I held on to Bollywood dancing alone, perhaps those who are not Indian would still enjoy watching it; but only because it is "exotic." If I only did hip hop dancing, I would lose my connection to Indian dancing. Thus, I joined a Bollywood-Hip Hop dance team in college—a fusion more accepted in Western culture and one that allows me to cherish both of my identities.

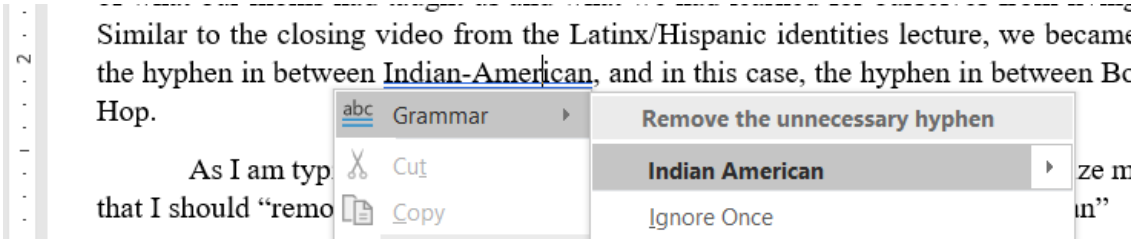
Before, I used to compartmentalize my identities—I am 50 percent Indian and 50 percent American. Now, I see myself as 100 percent both. Sure, that adds up to 200—and it rightfully should, because I get to experience two rich and diverse cultures simultaneously. On our dance team, we proudly dance to the following Indian styles: *kathak*, a classical dance form that translates to "story"; *bhangra,* an energetic dance form that emerged from Punjabi folk traditions; *bharatnatyam,* another classical dance form with roots of the word combining to mean "emotion, melody, rhythm, dance" ("Expression – Bharatnatyam," n.d.); *garba*, a communal dance form emerging in Gujarat; and lastly, Bollywood, the more mainstream dancing for which the Indian movie industry is famous. We also dance to the following non-Indian styles: hip hop, which originates from the U.S. Black and Hispanic cultures; contemporary, which combines forms such as ballet and jazz; and Spanish hip hop, which involves dancing to more mainstream music that is in Spanish. I could not be happier that I have the opportunity to learn from all of these dance forms and dance with other amazing Indian-American friends who have turned into family. Zindaa, the name of the dance team, translates to "alive," and indeed being a part of it has made me feel alive.

In one of my social work classes, we were once asked the question, "Would you want to be an individual of another ethnic group?" Although my ethnic identity is that of an oppressed group, I could not imagine life any other way. Although this may be a controversial opinion, I would not trade my culture, art, and friendships for privilege. Instead, I will wait until my ethnicity is accepted by those who are privileged. I will wait until they learn that the hyphen belongs and the red squiggly line does not. In the dance video below, Zindaa dances to a contemporary piece entitled "This is Me," which accurately encompasses how through dance, I can embody my Indian-American identity; after all, this is me.

Keywords: Indian, Dance, Bollywood, Hip-Hop, Identity

Supplementary Materials

Appendix 1: Microsoft Word Error



Appendix 2: Zindaa's 2020 Performance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQMCOWni0TI

Zindaa's performance, February 2020, at Discover India, Foellinger Auditorium. I helped choreograph some of the routines and performed at this event.

Dance styles broken up:

Time	***Dance Style***	***Song Title***	***Artist(s)***
0:16-1:15	Kathak	"Taal Se Taal (Western)"	Sukhwinder Singh
1:16-2:13	Bollywood	"Dil Laga Na"	Mahalakshmi Iyer, Soham Chakraborty, Jolly Mukherjee, Suzanne D'Mello, Sukhbir, Pritam Chakraborty, Sameer
2:14-3:01	Bhangra	"Tunak Tunak (Remix)"	Daler Mehndi
3:02-4:56	Contemporary	"This is Me"	Keala Settle, The Greatest Showman Ensemble, Benj Pasek, Justin Paul
4:57-6:06	Spanish Hip Hop	"No Lie"	Sean Paul, Dua Lipa
6:05-7:48	Bollywood	"Jai Jai Shivshankar"	Benny Dayal, Vishal Dadlani

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Literature Review

Residential Segregation and the Concentration of Black Poverty

Eddie Ryan

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

This study aims to examine the issue of concentrated Black poverty in urban areas through the lens of residential segregation and discriminatory housing policy. Several major housing policies impacting African Americans from the Reconstruction Era into the present are first outlined, followed by a literature review of prominent academic works on residential segregation and poverty concentration. Both racial and class-based forms of residential segregation are analyzed. In light of the lingering systemic barriers to racial equality and wealth accumulation for Blacks, and the role residential segregation has played in constructing these obstacles, this study advocates further research into policies of wealth redistribution and job creation to both assist and empower impoverished Blacks to escape the poverty cycle.

Keywords: Residential Segregation, Concentrated Black Poverty, Housing Discrimination

Residential Segregation and the Concentration of Black Poverty

Throughout Black Americans' arduous and ongoing struggle for freedom and equality, racial discrimination has engendered many systemic obstacles which have relegated them to a lesser societal status. A crucial example is residential segregation, defined as the concentration of minorities in urban areas with Whites predominantly in affluent suburbs (Gotham, 1998).

In 2010-2014, Blacks were more than five times more likely than Whites to live in an extremely poor neighborhood; while Whites are 44% of the nation's poor, they are only 18% of those in such neighborhoods (Kneebone and Holmes, 2016). In view of this disparity, this study aims to assess how residential segregation housing policies have concentrated and perpetuated Black urban poverty, creating a contemporary roadblock to racial equality. Major works have yielded important findings regarding the relationship between residential policies and racial poverty: Segregation of poor Blacks from both Whites, more affluent Blacks, and affluent non-

Black neighbors has helped concentrate Black poverty, and the retrenchment marking much of the federal and local housing policy of the mid to late 20th century has exacerbated the issue. Moreover, lacking equal access to homeownership through most of the 20th century, Blacks did not accumulate wealth through equity as did Whites, resulting in a racial wealth gap that makes escaping the poverty cycle difficult. Beginning with an examination of housing policies from Reconstruction through the 1990's, this study first focuses on the history of residential segregation and then outlines the findings of seminal academic works.

An Overview of Modern U.S. Housing Policy

Between the Civil War and the 20th century, Blacks and Whites did not experience modern segregation. Instead, "in the north, a small native Black population was scattered widely throughout white neighborhoods" and "in southern cities...Black servants and laborers lived on alleys and side streets near the mansions of their White employers" (Massey and Denton 1993, 17). This was short-lived, however, as ghettoization soon began in a deliberately discriminatory fashion. Ghettoization refers to the process by which American cities came to contain poor, slum-like sections with predominantly Black residents while Whites occupied separate, wealthier sections, a key development through which the existing racial hierarchy was reformed but nevertheless retained. As Massey and Denton (1993) write, "Through its actions and inactions, white America built and maintained the structure of the ghetto" (19). This became evident following the Great Depression, amidst Jim Crow segregation, when Blacks faced mortgage exclusion, restrictive covenants, and redlining of certain areas to prevent their homeownership in white neighborhoods (Vox, 2018).

These practices continued through the economic downturn of the 1970's despite efforts like the 1968 Fair Housing Act, which protected people from discrimination on account of race and a number of other characteristics when buying a home or securing a mortgage. Despite being one of the key achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, this legislation was unfortunately not enforced in a sufficiently vigorous and systematic manner so as to prevent the discriminatory housing practices that continued to run rampant. The continued oppression brought on by these practices was exacerbated by economic hardship in the 1970's, which devastated poor Black families. To Massey and Denton (1993), "What the Black communities of the 1930's and the 1970's share is a high degree of segregation from the rest of society and a great deal of hardship stemming from larger economic upheavals" (118). Furthermore, Federal housing policy retrenchment from 1970 onward has drastically decreased welfare aid to Blacks living in impoverished areas, while other discriminatory housing market practices such as sub-prime lending lingered into the 1990's (Vox, 2018). This last tactic involved the provision of loans designed for higher risk borrowers to Black individuals at higher interest rates simply because of their race, rendering them much more likely to default on their loans and deflate their credit scores and by and large preventing them from owning homes.

The Roles of Race and Class in Residential Segregation

Massey and Denton's seminal work *American Apartheid* has been a key entry point for other scholars into the larger discourse. In a research simulation with four purely hypothetical cities controlled for relevant demographic factors, Massey (1993) applied different degrees of segregation to explore their effect on racial group poverty. The four cities were designed to match major metropolitan areas like Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City in 1970 in terms

of racial composition, size, and racial group poverty rates. After assigning each hypothetical city an increased level of racial segregation in each successive stage of the simulation, Massey found the absence of racial or class-based segregation corresponded to unchanged group poverty rates. However, higher racial segregation increased poverty concentration and exposure for Blacks while simultaneously lowering such exposure for Whites. When class segregation is simulated in addition to racial segregation, Black poverty levels again rise disproportionately; in other words, the impact of racial segregation on Black poverty is worsened by class segregation, though Massey views class as a secondary factor (Massey and Denton, 1993).

Some scholars criticize the book's primary focus on race, arguing class segregation has combined equally with racial segregation to concentrate minority poverty in the context of post-1970 federal housing policy retrenchment. Analyzing post-1970 Kansas City's urban core using census data and housing documentation, Gotham (1998) highlights the elevation of Black joblessness spurred by the replacement of urban manufacturing with suburban service jobs. According to him, retrenchment in public housing and welfare, along with "blind faith in the free market," translated into efforts by municipalities to de-emphasize public service provision and general social redistribution in favor of attracting business investment by "creating a favorable business climate" (Gotham 1998, 13). Businesses investing in urban areas lack incentive in the short term to ameliorate conditions for the poor, since the primary concern of the former is to make money and to appeal to those capable of spending it. Thus, without any accompanying socioeconomic investment into the community, the emphasis on cultivating a favorable business climate leaves the poor to fend for themselves with less assistance. Given his examination of nationwide factors like federal housing policy retrenchment, racial discrimination, and broader

macroeconomic change and their impact on poverty concentration, Gotham's findings could extend to other metropolitan areas that have faced similar challenges.

While some scholars contend market-reliant housing policies impact the poor equally, regardless of race, recent studies illustrate certain policies have been intensely harmful for poor Blacks in particular. DeLuca (2013) discusses a modern welfare alternative, Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 8 Voucher program, delineating its perpetuation of concentrated poverty in residentially segregated areas. Beginning in 1974, the Section 8 Voucher Program is a HUD initiative designed to provide housing assistance payments and rent subsidies to very-low-income families. DeLuca collected longitudinal qualitative interview data with 100 families living below the poverty line in Mobile, Alabama in an effort to examine the ineffectiveness of HUD's voucher program in helping minority families escape impoverished, segregated neighborhoods. As market-based remedies proliferated, she argued, the voucher program failed to adequately assist poor Blacks. With inefficient wait lists, time constraints for finding new residence, and little housing counseling for Blacks accustomed to poverty, the program essentially sent them into the low-income rental market alone, without facilitating their escape from poor areas. As a result, most people land in places equally poor and racially segregated as those which they aimed to escape (DeLuca, 2013). Though she studied one city, DeLuca's findings address the lack of research on housing in small, Southern cities, and are reflective of other urban locations because of similarities in the types of residential housing offered. Hence, excessive reliance on the free market has exposed poor Blacks to the pervasive effects of historical residential segregation-based housing policy instead of helping them overcome the poverty trap.

Opposition to Massey's Narrative and its Enhancement

Others have countered this general line of thinking, particularly Massey's assertion that racial segregation is the primary driver of concentrated poverty. Gans, the notable contrarian, argues the term "concentrated poverty" itself is misleading (Gans 2010, 83). He views the notion that high poverty concentration breeds more poverty as empirically unsound, warning such a conception leads to policies that merely break up neighborhoods without addressing root causes like joblessness. He additionally views the term as potentially punitive, as poor Blacks become increasingly associated with the social ills of poverty through its usage, despite the lack of resources and policy relief to assuage them. Fearing a misattribution of poverty's negative consequences, Gans contends many of the afflictions of high-poverty areas result both directly and indirectly from extreme poverty itself, not explicitly from its concentration (Gans, 2010).

Gans (2010) aligns himself with Wilson (1992), who focuses on class issues as the dominant source of poverty concentration and emphasizes the centrality of Black joblessness to the presence of an urban underclass mired in extreme poverty and social isolation. Citing historical discrimination and the outmigration of middle- and upper-class Blacks from the cities to areas previously unavailable due to restricted covenants in a 1992 reflection on his 1987 book *The Truly Disadvantaged,* Wilson argues a particularly young Black urban labor force was quite vulnerable to the macroeconomic changes of the 1970's. These included a shift toward service-producing rather than goods-producing industries, the widening gap between low and high wage sectors of the labor market, and the advent of modern technology to replace manufacturing jobs. According to Wilson, Black joblessness in urban areas increased during this period of deindustrialization, leading to increased poverty concentration, single-parent households, and

welfare dependency. Social isolation for this underclass was facilitated by the absence of a middle-class buffer, a term that refers to the integrated presence of a middle-class population alongside the urban poor. Such a buffer had previously provided enhanced stability through community investment as well as a vision of upward mobility for the poor before outmigration cut its presence (Wilson, 1992).

The assertions of Gans and Wilson in view of Massey's thinking suggest two notions: First, deconcentrating poverty will neither fully eliminate it nor curb the social consequences associated with it. Second, race- and class-based forms of residential segregation may concentrate Black poverty in tandem, rather than separately. Relying on census tract data from 2000, Quillian (2012) enhances Massey's model into a decomposition model accounting for originally neglected class demographics whose omittance obscures the impact of segregation on poverty concentration. One such factor meriting attention is income-status segregation across races, specifically the separation of poor Blacks from high- and middle-income Whites (Quillian, 2012). Quillian offers this as a third major factor at play in the concentration of Black poverty through residential segregation, augmenting Massey's focus on pure racial segregation and intra-race income segregation. Thus, by current consensus, three bases of residential segregation have concentrated Black poverty: race, income status within race, and cross-racial income status.

Conclusion

In view of the plethora of racially discriminatory and segregationist housing policies that have plagued Black Americans since the Civil War, it is evident residential segregation has played a decisive role in concentrating Black poverty in urban communities. The problem persists today, as the odds of upward social mobility are stacked against Blacks due to the racial

wealth gap. Generally, residential segregation based on a combination of racial discrimination and class separation, isolating poor Blacks from middle- and high- income residents of all races, is regarded as the most significant factor concentrating Black poverty.

Ultimately, the way in which redistributive policies might be revamped to deconcentrate the poverty entrenched by residential segregation constitutes the most noteworthy gap in the present research. Due to the embedded, systemic racism in the American housing market, strict reliance on the free market and the expectation of Black autonomy are ineffective remedies for racial residential segregation. Until the roadblocks to Black upward socioeconomic mobility are removed, Black autonomy cannot flourish independently. A reversal of the drastic reduction of welfare assistance to poor Blacks in conjunction with a legitimate, universal effort to create jobs thus seems the most needed course of action at present, while the aim of helping Blacks to leave poor, segregated areas for diverse, mixed-income ones should also be central. As such, further research should explore how more innovative redistributive policies might assuage the plight of the Black urban poor; this literature review points in these directions.

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Research-Based Poster Presentations

Relationships Between Teacher Support, Informal Social Control and Students' Perceptions of Safety

David T. Mowry

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

Background: Despite the efforts of schools and their communities to impose new policies to protect their students, students continue to report high levels of concerns about being attacked in certain school settings (Lenzi, et. al., 2017). Unlike looking at risk factors in past studies, this study was to focus on protective correlates. Informal social control is defined as teachers intervening in cases such as bullying or assault. It is hypothesized that higher levels of teacher support and informal social control leads to higher perceptions of safety in students.

Methods: 316 sixth grade students (52.9% female) were included in the study. Their ages ranged from 11 to 13 years (M= 11.66, SD= 0.51). These students were from a large public middle school in the United States. The study measured perception of safety and scales of teacher support and informal social control. Bivariate correlations and multivariate regression were conducted to identify the significance of the relationships between teacher support/informal social control and student safety perceptions.

Results: Teacher support and informal social control were both positively correlated with the perceptions of student's safety. Though regression analyses, Teacher support (B= 0.26, $p < .01$) and informal social control (B=0.15, $p<.01$) were both associated with the perceptions and feelings of safety in the students.

Discussion: These results highlight the importance of new policies that give teachers the tools and knowledge to help and protect students both at school and within their communities. Further exploration is needed to continue to make students feel safe and accepted during their education.

Keywords: Safety, Middle School, and Mental Health

Relationships Between Teacher Support, Informal Social Control and Students' Perceptions of Safety

David T. Mowry
Faculty Mentor: Rachel Garthe, PhD
School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

INTRODUCTION

Students' perceptions of school safety during middle school is particularly important to their mental health and overall academic performance (Joyce, 2019).

- At the individual level and at the aggregate level, students report higher feelings of safety when they also perceive higher levels of teacher support and informal social control (i.e., perceptions that teachers/staff would intervene if a conflict or violent situation took place). This relationship is found when examining the perspectives of both the students and the teachers (Lenzi, et. al., 2017). For example, both student and teacher perceptions of higher levels of safety are associated with academic achievement, better mental/physical health, and lower risk behaviors (Lenzi, et. al., 2017).
- Teacher support and informal social control may be more strongly associated with safety than formal social control (e.g., security cameras, metal detectors, and surveillance measures), as formal social control has shown to lower informal social control and relationships with teachers and other adults at the schools; (Lenzi, et. al., 2017). This may be due to a perceived lack of trust and community.
- Also, the lack of connection between teachers and students is associated with decreased levels of safety perceptions in schools with higher levels of formal social control (Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012). These associations are stronger when participants include people of color and people of lower socioeconomic status (SES).

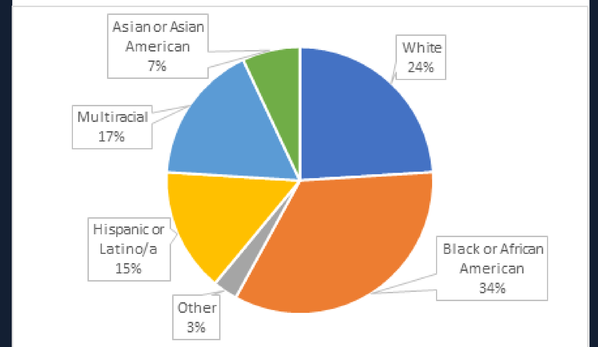
The Current Study

The current study analyzes how both teacher support and informal social control influences students' perceptions of safety in school and in their communities. This adds to existing literature by supporting the finding that there is a significant correlation between these variables. It is hypothesized higher levels of teacher support and informal social control leads to students' stronger feelings of safety.

METHOD

Participants

316 sixth-grade students (52.9% female) were included in the study. Their ages ranged from 11 to 13 years (M= 11.66, SD= 0.51). 21.2% of students indicated a Spanish/Hispanic/Latino/a ethnicity. These students were from a large, suburban public middle school in the United States.



Procedures

The study measured students' perceptions of safety from the "School Informal Social Control" Scale (Williams & Guerra, 2007) and perceptions of teacher support (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003).

Researchers went to a local middle school to survey the students in their classes. An institutional review board approved study procedures, which included obtaining passive parental consent and written student assent.

While students completed their survey, researchers handed out snacks. They were then asked to sit quietly until all the students finished. All survey information was collected on electronic tablets.

Data Analysis

Bivariate correlations and multivariate regression were conducted to identify the significance of the relationships between teacher support/informal social control and student safety perceptions.

RESULTS

Teacher support and informal social control were both positively correlated with the perceptions of students' safety.

Through regression analyses, students' perceptions of teacher support (B= 0.26, p< .01) and informal social control (B=0.15, p<.01) were both associated with the perceptions and feelings of students' safety.

	Safety		
	B	β	p
Teacher Support	0.256	0.234	0.000 or <.01
Informal Social Control	0.146	0.194	0.003 or <.01

DISCUSSION

Middle School and Current Policies: Argument for Change

It appears this middle school's current policy briefly focuses on time spent on safety and supporting students by suggesting the students are responsible - how "they" (the students) can create a better academic environment. The school lined up a team of professionals with titles collectively containing every letter of the alphabet, which is great, except those credentials mean nothing to the students. It could be argued there is a critical need for how teachers and students can get involved. Teachers need to lead by example, inserting themselves even in the least significant of cases. It is reasonable to suggest that teachers who care to intervene in cases, such as teasing, would be willing to stop a fight. ***How are the teachers and staff showing they are supporting their students? How are they building and representing their community?***

CONCLUSIONS

While the research area is relatively new, there is significant statistical data showing teacher support and informal social control are key components to students' perception of safety.

Student safety has been considered a top priority as policies have been made, but it can be argued these policies have focused too heavily on formal social control. ***A school can have the highest level of security, but if the students do not feel safe or connected to their teachers and school staff, their mental health and academic success may suffer.***

- This study supports previous findings by confirming results of higher levels of perceived safety when influenced by higher levels of teacher support. This study also adds to the literature by examining both teacher support and informal social control in relation to student safety among middle school students.
- Most of the studies done, including this one, were limited in the number of participants. There was also a lack of an examination in how SES impacts perceptions as well. The concept of safety is also subjective, as it is attempted to be quantified by translating it to an ordinal scale in most studies.

It is recommended to conduct more larger-scale studies, particularly noting the differences in perceptions by factors such as geography, socioeconomics, access to health care, language barriers, etc. Identifying consistency or problem areas can lead to better policies to be put into place to protect students.

For more information, please contact:
David T. Mowry
dmowry2@illinois.edu

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Associations Between Mental Health and Attendance Among 6th Grade Students

Amanda Yeazel, Ashley Ruebling

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

Maintaining mental health and attending school regularly are important during early adolescence. This period is particularly critical for developmental processes, including the development of a sense of responsibility and other social skills. Recent reviews have indicated there is a positive relationship between anxiety and attendance problems in students. Thus, it is important for researchers to look at how negative mental health symptoms (depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, and attention problems) are associated with various types of school absences (excused, unexcused, and tardies). The hypothesis was there would be a positive relationship between poor mental health and increased absences among early adolescents. Participants included 316 sixth grade students from an urban area in Illinois, who participated in a survey that examined both mental health and attendance rates. Linear regression analyses were conducted in SPSS software to examine the relationship between mental health and types of absences. Results indicated students had high levels of negative mental health symptoms; 27.3% of students displayed clinical levels of depression. Students also exhibited high rates of absences. On average, students missed 3.45 days of unexcused absences. Regression analyses indicated higher levels of hyperactivity symptoms were associated with more unexcused absences ($B = .44$, $p = .01$) and tardies ($B = .87$, $p < .001$). Attention problems were also associated with more tardies ($B = .76$, $p < .001$). No other significant relationships were found. This school and other urban middle schools can use these findings to support student's specific mental health needs to increase attendance.

Keywords: Mental Health, Attendance, Middle School

Associations Between Mental Health and Attendance Problems Among 6th Grade Students

Amanda Yeazel & Ashley Ruebling
Faculty Mentor: Rachel Garthe, PhD
School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

INTRODUCTION

Concern Between Mental Health & Attendance
- Maintaining good mental health and attending school is seemingly important during early adolescence

Previous researchers have found children who have difficulties attending school may be at greater risk for developing poor social skills and developing mental health issues (Dube & Orpinas, 2009).

Mental Health Prevalence
An alarming number of children are diagnosed with behavioral and mental health problems

- 7.1% of children ages 3-17 were diagnosed with anxiety (Ghandour et al., 2018)
- 3.2% of children ages 3-17 were diagnosed with depression (Ghandour et al., 2018)
- 9.4% of children ages 2-17 were diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Danielson et al., 2018)
- These numbers do not account for the number of children who have not been diagnosed or who display high or at-risk symptoms for these mental health and behavioral difficulties

Previous Research
Several studies have found there is a significant association between poor mental health (i.e., anxiety, depression, ADHD) and attendance problems within schools (Finning et al., 2019; Glomb et al., 2006; Guevera et al., 2013; McCarthy et al., 2018).

However, to our knowledge, no studies have looked at these mental health symptoms in relation to various attendance problems among middle school students

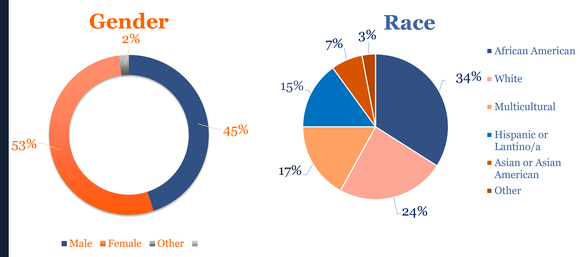
Current Study

Our study furthers this area of research to examine what associations exist between negative mental health and behavioral health symptoms (anxiety, depression, hyperactivity, and attention problems) and attendance problems (excused and unexcused absences and truancy) among a sample of sixth grade students.

Hypothesis:
It was hypothesized there would be a positive relationship between poor mental health and attendance problems among a sample of early adolescents in the sixth grade
In other words, more mental and behavioral health concerns would be associated with more attendance problems.

METHOD

Participants: 316 sixth grade students from a middle school in an urban area in central Illinois participated in the study. Demographics included:

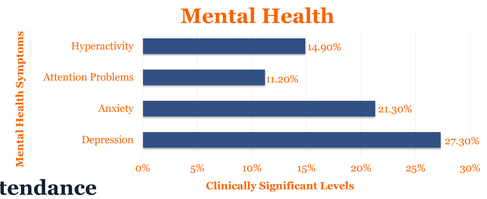


Procedure: Students completed assessments on tablets. An institutional review board approved all study procedures, including obtaining passive parental consent and active student assent.

Data Analysis: Linear regressions were conducted using SPSS software to examine the relationship between mental and behavioral health (i.e., depression, anxiety, attention, and hyperactivity problems; *independent variables*) and attendance outcomes (i.e., unexcused, and excused absences, truancy; *dependent variables*)

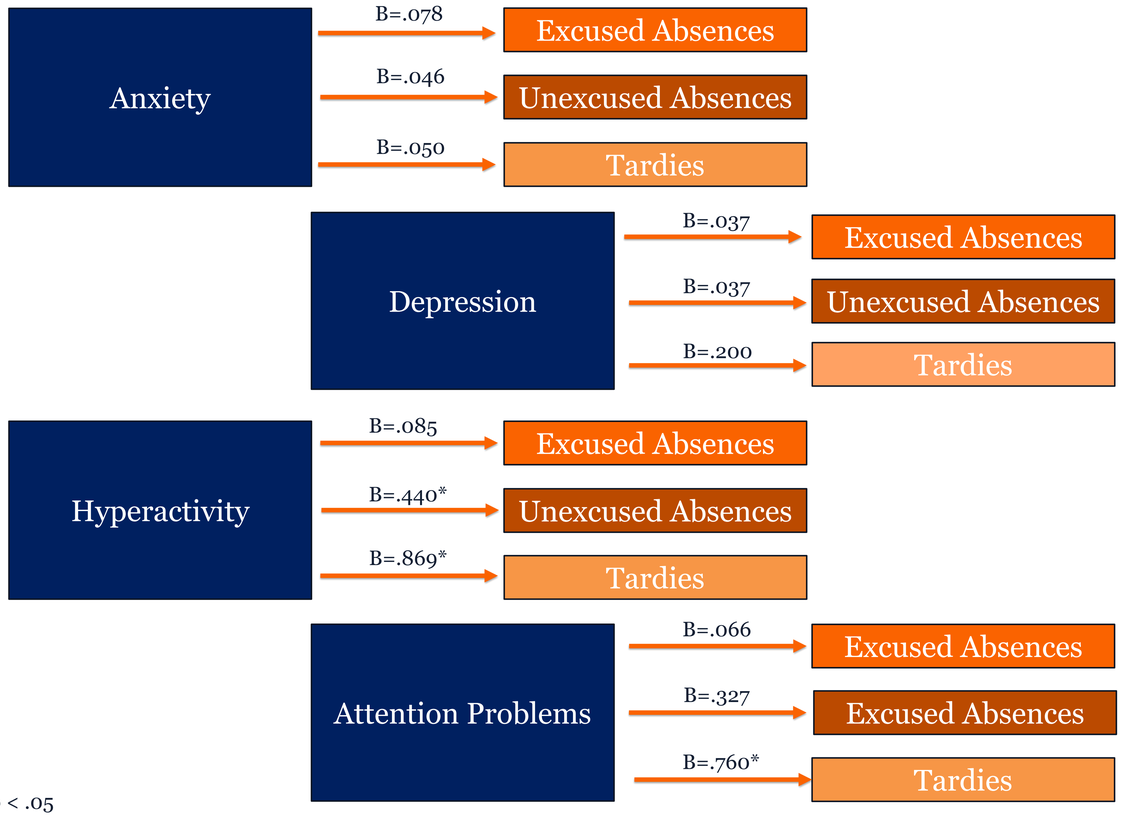
RESULTS

Mental Health
There were high levels of negative mental health symptoms displayed among these students: N=316



Attendance
The students surveyed exhibited high rates of attendance problems for all categories
- On average students missed 3.45 unexcused days
- On average students missed .75 excused days
- There was an average of 36.70 tardies across all students

Regression Analysis (See Figures below)
- Regression analyses showed that higher levels of hyperactivity were associated with more unexcused absences (B= 0.44, p=.01) and tardies (B=.087, p<.001).
- Attention problems were also associated with tardies (B=0.76, p<.001)
- No other significant relationships were found



*p < .05

Discussion

Findings
Significant relationships were found between hyperactivity, attention problems, and attendance. Anxiety and depression had no significant relationships with any types of attendance problems.
- There may have been limitations that may have impacted the insignificant findings. For example, different types of anxiety were not accounted for (e.g., social anxiety, test anxiety) that may have contributed to attendance problems.
- There is a lack of research with these variables among middle school students, so other significant findings found in the past may be due to age differences.

Limitations
- Cross-sectional study
- Different countries and areas such as rural vs. urban may differ in results
- Results may not be generalizable to all middle school students
- Other variables may exist that impact the relationships found such as social skills, victimization, ethnic differences, safety, and discrimination.

Implications
Middle schools can use these findings to support student's mental health and increase attendance rates by creating resources for students with attention problems and hyperactivity.

Social workers can use this research to broaden their knowledge and implement new skills, ideas and resources into their practice within schools.

It is important to teach kids about this information and provide support in order to prevent poor mental health and attendance problems across development.

Contact Information

For more information on this study, contact:

Amanda Yeazel
ayeazel2@Illinois.edu

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Scholarly Research

The Relationship Between Ninth Grade Students' Social Skills and Internalizing Problems by Free-and-Reduced Lunch Status

Thomas E. Bates III, BSW; Kevin Tan, PhD; Esther Shin, Doctoral Candidate

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

High school is a critical time for the development of social skills as students grapple with exploring their sense of self and future. As such, many high school students experience internalizing problems, such as anxiety, fearfulness, and depression. The current study examines how social skills and internalizing problems differ among those who receive free-or-reduced lunch (FRL) and those who do not. Based on a cohort of ninth-grade students from one high school in Central Illinois (n=323), two-way moderation analysis was applied. The interaction term (ninth grade social skills X FRL) was significant for the model predicting internalizing problems at 10th grade, after taking into account students' other demographics, problem behaviors, grades, attendance, and school disciplinary problems. The interaction plot for students on FRL indicates a marginal difference in internalizing problems among those with low and high social skills. However, for non-FRL students, those with low social skills reported more significant differences in internalizing problems than those with high social skills. Implications for social work practice relating to high school social and emotional development are discussed.

Keywords: Social Skills, Internalizing Problems, Free and Reduced Lunch, Academic, Face-Work, High School, School Transitions, Socioeconomic Status

Introduction

Students confront a plethora of changes during their first year of high school such as new teachers, changes to their bodies, and the composition and dynamics of their peer groups (Benner, 2011; Benner et al., 2017; Roderick, 2003). The experience of some internalizing problems, such as anxiety, fearfulness and depression is normative, and some students cope better than others and move on to do well in school (Najman et al., 2010). Some students may require school-based supports as they adjust to their new school environment. This is critical in the first year of high school, as evidence suggests that such supports may determine key

outcomes such as graduation rates. Students may continue to experience effects of these changes into proceeding years of high school (De Wit et al., 2011; Najman et al., 2010). However, the freshman year is identified as "make-or-break" in evaluations with low-income students (Phillips, 2019).

The transition into high school can elicit feelings such as anxiety and nervousness (Benner, 2011; Benner et al., 2017), and for the 41% of students nationally who reside in low-income households, the risk of experiencing internalizing problems may be acute (Koball & Jiang, 2018). A large body of literature highlights the disadvantages students in poverty experience (Najman et al., 2010; Wadsworth et al., 2013). For example, limited access to resources create heightened risk of mental health problems (Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Social skills such as communication, empathy, and engagement may be the key to managing such risks, given ample evidence of their role in students' ability to navigate transitions and to comprehend the social norms of their new school environment (Benner et al., 2017; Neel & Fuligni, 2013; Neild, Stoner-Eby, & Furstenberg, 2008; Tan, Oe, & Hoang Le, 2018; Tan, Sinha, Oe, Wang, 2018).

This paper addresses a gap in the literature by investigating whether a students' level of social skills interacts with socioeconomic status in determining students' experience of internalizing problems among a cohort from a single high school in Central Illinois. It uses qualification for free or reduced priced lunch (FRL) as a measure of socioeconomic status and examines the relationship between ninth grade social skills and 10th grade internalizing problems. Findings can be utilized to develop more effective interventions for use by high school teachers, administrators, school counselors and school social workers.

Literature Review

Face-Work Theory

Goffman's face-work theory (Goffman, 1967) can be used to understand the experience of students on FRL as they transition into high school. Face-work is based on the premise that a person's experience of their social environments is both relational and interactional. Individuals engage with their environment differently depending on their relationships with the participants, and with the knowledge that those interactions may impact their standing with those people. The nature and quality of interaction are critical to the development of their sense of self (Arundale, 2006). Researchers have widely applied Goffman's theory in the study of human interactions, linguistics, and relationships (Arundale, 2006). Indeed, face-work is useful to understand students' experience entering high school. As students navigate the complex web of social dynamics present in schools, Goffman's theory draws attention to the multiple roles that students may explore. Goffman identifies *lines*, the episodic roles that people act out in situations, and *face*, the summative capital built through those interactions, as the operative terms for his theory. These terms capture well the dynamic among high school students (Goffman, 1967).

As face-work theory suggests, students today must be equipped with strong social skills to juggle the multiple identities or "lines" they may experience in ninth grade. Students may also experience an array of challenges during their transition into high school: environments change in nearly every aspect, from the building, classroom(s), teachers, administrators, and expectations (Benner, 2011). High schools are often larger in many ways than middle schools, with hundreds or thousands of students traversing the halls. Classroom sizes may also grow, sometimes dramatically. The grammar of the classroom – desks, classroom organization, aesthetic, differs from their past experience, a reflection of the increased expectations and

independence (Benner et al., 2017). Unlike in their elementary years, students must hold a schedule in their mind, and have agency in finding, attending, and following through on their classes (Benner, 2011). As students navigate the simultaneous changes in their environment and peer, teacher, and parental expectations (Benner, 2011), they must manage their sense of self and their face-work.

Challenges Students on FRL Experience

The literature has widely documented the effects of growing up in poverty and the important role of social skills in promoting positive life outcomes for students in low-income families (Benner, 2011; Benner et al., 2017; Najman et al., 2010). However, existing literature applying face-work as a framework to discuss the experience of American students is sparse. Students from families that qualify for FRL can experience multiple stressors, one such example including the parents' decision to marry, which has implications for parental and family supports which may impact their later decisions regarding schooling and the workforce (Watson & McLanahan, 2009). Some students on FRL may not have access to role models who can coach them on the social skills they need to traverse the challenges of entering a new school environment (Lee et al., 2011; Sanner & Neece, 2018). When navigating the social systems of life generally and schools in particular, students who are well supported in these transitions tend to experience an advantage. Such support often comes from adults (e.g., parents and teachers), overall school belonging, and peer support (Benner et al., 2017). Additionally, these students may not receive the positive social support from their peers or teachers that wealthier students access to navigate the challenges of high school (De Wit et al., 2011).

In the absence of positive role models and social support, internalizing problems, such as anxiety and self-doubt, can emerge (De Wit et al., 2011). As students become more aware of their

identities and relationships, the quality of their social skills plays a prominent role in their ability to manage their self-image and social interactions (Benner et al., 2017). Existing literature identifies a connection between social skills needs and the experience of internalizing problems (Tan, Sinha, Oe, Wang, 2018). Managing face-work during their high school years is especially important as students begin to engage more actively in consumer behaviors, such as going to the movies with peers, purchasing clothes for themselves to reflect their identities, and engaging in activities relating to dating. Participation in these activities requires both financial means and social skills, and students begin to engage in more complex face-work. Students on FRL may feel set apart by their economic disadvantage.

Influence of Problem Behaviors, Academics, and other Demographic Characteristics

In understanding the relation among social skills, internalizing problems, and FRL status, it is critical that we consider the influence of problem behaviors such as aggression, school disciplinary problems, and academic performance (Benner, 2011). Other demographic characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) status are also important to consider as these can influence students experience in school (Benner, 2011; Benner et al., 2017; Najman et al., 2010). While a thorough review of the influence of students' problem behaviors, academics, and demographics on their social skills, internalizing problems and FRL status is beyond the scope of this paper, we considered the influence of these areas in our analyses.

Current Study

Overall, the transition into high school is challenging for many students and internalizing problems can emerge; it may be more difficult for those with poor social skills and on FRL status. The extant literature has not explicitly evaluated the intersection of students' FRL status,

social skills, and internalizing outcomes, but it does suggest that examining this intersection can help us to better understand the needs of students. This study undertakes such an examination in a cohort of ninth grade students in one high school in semi-urban Central Illinois. We address the following research question: Do the relations between social skills at ninth grade and internalizing problems at 10th grade differ based on FRL status? If so, how do the relations differ? In this study, based upon Benner's (2011) review of high school transition research, we hypothesize FRL students with lower social skills will have more internalizing problems as compared to those with higher social skills. Likewise, we believe for non-FRL students, the same relationship between social skills and internalizing problems will exist.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

This study is based on a larger longitudinal project on social-emotional learning among a cohort of students in a single high school in Central Illinois. Trained research assistants (RAs) collected the data in classrooms and/or the school auditorium during students' study hall periods. RAs collected student data in pairs, with one RA administering the written survey and a second helping to address questions from students when they arise. Parents/guardians were informed about the study through an email the school sent them a week prior to data collection allowing them to opt their children out of participation by a return email. Verbal and written assent from the student were required prior to data collection. The University of Illinois Institutional Research Board and the school's district office approved the study protocol.

Overall, the full cohort size was 375 ninth-grade students, 323 of whom completed surveys for this study. The remaining 52 students were either absent or declined participation

during the period of data collection or had been opted out by their parents/guardians. In the analytical sample, 55% of students receive FRL, and 12% had an IEP. The racial breakdown was as follows: 38% Black, 48% White, 12% Asian, and 2% other. The gender breakdown was 52% male, 48% female. Data was collected in the Spring of the ninth-grade year and the 10th grade year. At 10th grade, 181 students responded to the surveys in both waves.

Measures

Social Skills. Social skills were measured based on 46 questions from the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS, ages 13-18; Gresham & Elliott, 2008). These questions assessed seven aspects of social skills: communication (e.g. "I take turns when I talk with others"), cooperation (e.g. "I do what the teacher asks me to do"), assertion (e.g. "I ask for help when I need it"), responsibility (e.g. "I tell people when I have made a mistake"), empathy (e.g., "I try to make others feel better"), engagement (e.g. "I make friends easily"), and self-control (e.g. "I stay calm when I am teased"). The response choices for all questions were based on a scale from 0 = "not true" to 3 = "very true." The responses to the questions were averaged to create a social skills variable. Cronbach's alpha was 0.94.

Internalizing Problems. Internalizing problems were based on 10 items from the SSIS. Examples of questions asked were "I am afraid of a lot of things," "I get embarrassed easily," and "I think bad things will happen to me." Students responded to these questions on a scale of not true (0) to very true (3). Questions were averaged to create an internalizing problems variable. Cronbach's alpha was 0.86.

Problem Behaviors. The SSIS also assessed for three other problem domains involving externalizing problems (12 questions e.g., "I swear or use bad words"; Cronbach's alpha: 0.82), bullying (5 questions e.g., "I try to make others afraid of me"; Cronbach's alpha: 0.55), and

hyperactivity/inattention (7 questions e.g., "I often do things without thinking"; Cronbach's alpha: 0.82). Students responded on a scale of 0 (not true) to 3 (very true). The mean for each domain was used in the analyses.

Demographics, Academics, Attendance, and Disciplinary Records. FRL status (1 = yes, 0 = no), race/ethnicity (binary coded Black, White, Asian, Others), gender (1 = female, 0 = male), and IEP status (1 = yes, 0 = no) were based on school administrative records. These records also provided data for academics (8^{th} grade: number of Fs, and 9^{th} grade: grade point averages), attendance (end-of-year percentage), and number of disciplinary referrals.

Data Analysis

Analysis was first conducted on all variables to compare differences between students on FRL and those who were not. Chi-square tests were used for categorical variables and independent sample t-tests for continuous variables. To understand if the relations between social skills and internalizing problems differ between students according to FRL, two-way moderation analysis was conducted (social skills X FRL). When conducting the moderation analysis, the social skills variable was grand-mean centered. In the model, demographics, students' eighth and ninth grade academics, attendance, number of disciplinary referrals, and other problem domains (externalizing, bullying, hyperactivity/inattention) were systematically entered as control variables. Demographics were entered first, followed by academics, attendance, and number of disciplinary referrals, and lastly, problem behaviors. Models with main effects first (not reported) were looked at, followed by models with the interaction terms. To interpret the significant interaction term, the interaction term was plotted (mean + 1 standard deviation; mean – 1 standard deviation). All analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 24.

Results

Demographics, Academics and Behavioral Differences Between FRL and Non-FRL Students

Table 1 reports the statistical tests of differences between FRL and non-FRL students. Slightly over half of the students on FRL are female (52.4%) and African American (58.8%). Approximately 13% of students on FRL have an IEP. In terms of ninth grade academics and school behaviors, students on FRL, compared to non-FRL students, received more Fs (mean 0.75 vs. 0.28) and attended fewer days of school (mean 10.90 vs. 8.05). In ninth grade, students on FRL had a lower GPA than their non-FRL counterparts (mean 2.55 vs. 3.02). Differences were also observed in ninth grade in externalizing behaviors (mean 0.71 vs. 0.59) and their social skills (mean 1.81 vs. 2.02).

Differences Between Social Skills, Internalizing Problems, and FRL Status

The interaction term for the model involving FRL X social skills predicting 10th grade internalizing problems with controls for students' demographics, academics, and school behaviors and problem behaviors was statistically significant ($p = 0.047$; see Supplementary Table 1). As seen in Figure 1, there was marginal difference in internalizing problems among students with FRL between those with low and high social skills. However, for non-FRL students, students with low social skills reported higher levels in internalizing problems than students with high social skills. Comparing between FRL and non-FRL students with low social skills, non-FRL students reported higher levels of internalizing problems compared to the FRL students.

Discussion

The present study examines what differences, if any, existed in the relationship between social skills and internalizing problems in consideration of FRL status, a question existing

literature has not addressed (to our knowledge). The study examined a cohort of ninth-grade students because of the growing importance of social skills in this time of transition into high school. Simultaneously with this transition, students experience decreasing teacher support (De Wit et al., 2011), increasing the importance of SS. Face-work (Goffman, 1967) is utilized as a theoretical framework with which to explore the results.

Face-work presents a unique lens from which to view these results, more firmly rooting interpretation in the everyday interactions students experience as they enter into high school. Findings suggest the social environment experienced and the stressors associated with the transition into high school may result in slightly increased internalizing problems when they enter 10th grade. Students who receive FRL and have high social skills experience slightly more internalizing problems. This finding may suggest students' awareness of their financial backgrounds and that socioeconomic status affects and restricts students' ability to navigate interactions common throughout the transition. These findings are consistent with the existing literature (e.g., Benner et al., 2017), which emphasizes the importance of social skills throughout the high school transition.

Interaction between Social Skills and Internalizing Problems

The interaction between social skills and internalizing problems appears to serve a more protective function for students from economically better-off families, with highly skilled students experiencing lower levels of internalizing problems as compared to non-FRL students. Findings may be explained by the possibility that these socially skilled FRL students may be more acutely aware of economic difference (McLoyd, 2019) and the stress of actively navigating this dynamic could contribute to the elevated internalizing problems that they experience. The high school years may raise awareness of students' economic abilities to participate in

extracurricular activities as they are forced to navigate their face-work and lines alongside their financial standing and consideration.

On the contrary, in this study, social skills do not appear to differentiate levels of internalizing problems among students on FRL. It may be because these students have adapted to their economic disadvantage and found ways to manage their sense of selves and their face-work as they navigate the multiple changes and social expectations in their high school years (Benner, 2011). This dynamic may explain the almost similar levels of internalizing problems among those with high and low social skills. Nonetheless, given the importance of the freshmen year and social skills in determining student long-term success (Benner et al., 2017; Phillips, 2019), it is critical to continue providing support for all students regardless of FRL status and their levels of social skills. Social skills are needed for students to navigate the ongoing and ever changing complex web of relationships and social norms as they progress towards young adulthood (Benner et al., 2017; Author 2, 2018; Author 2, 2018).

This study's analyses revealed the students' internalizing problems most impacted by the interaction of social skills and FRL status are non-FRL students with low social skills. This finding can be explained by Goffman's (1967) proposition that face-work is both relational and interactional in understanding their sense of selves (Arundale, 2006). It may be the case that non-FRL students with low social skills may experience a higher expectation to maintain their identities and social statues among peers (Watson & McLanahan, 2009) which results in heighted anxieties and internalizing problems. If so, it is essential that these students are supported and equipped with the necessary social skills to manage their face-work as they navigate through their high school years.

Practice Implications

Findings suggest schools must be aware of and equipped to handle students' mental health needs such as the internalizing problems. Interventions that include social-emotional learning concepts and facilitate peer and adult supports can do much to ameliorate the internalizing problems common in the high school transition (De Wit et al., 2011; Riglin et al., 2014). Schools should take an active role in monitoring for economic stressors that may impact students' performance and social development within the school (Matthews et al., 2017). Additionally, schools should consider efforts to more intentionally promote teacher and parent support throughout the transition into high school (Benner et al., 2017). This support may provide students with the opportunity to observe and develop their own skills. This may be especially beneficial to students who lack access to role models to model and coach social skills. For those students who have high social skills but receive FRL, the opportunity for additional support may provide an outlet for stress experienced in navigating those interactions.

Limitations & Areas for Future Research

The results of this study document an interaction between social skills and internalizing problems when viewed through FRL status. However, several limitations exist which open up compelling opportunities for future study. First, the results were obtained from one high school in Central Illinois, restricting generalizability. While the interaction effect may be considered marginal ($p = 0.047$), this is the first study to examine the interlinkages among social skills, internalizing problems and FRL status. Future studies may validate this finding with a larger sample. Additionally, future studies examining this interaction should examine this relationship in schools with different socioeconomic and geographic makeups, to investigate if the effect holds in areas with different composition of FRL to non-FRL students. Second, data was

gathered through a self-report tool, which allows for the report of socially desirable responses. Third, this study reflects a one-year window of social skills at ninth grade and internalizing problems at 10th grade. This small timeframe does not allow for strong causality inferences. Future studies should consider examining this interaction over a longer period. This study does not assess parental or teacher support, but further evaluation of this support system along with modeling of social skills is an area for future research.

Conclusion

This study is unique in both its utilization of Goffman's (1967) face-work in this context, and in its examination of the intersections among social skills, internalizing problems and FRL statues. Results underscore the importance of social skills throughout the high school transition, but it also revealed that for a select population of high-skills students who receive FRL, these same social skills may work to foster internalizing problems when students do not have access to outside supports. These results encourage schools to be mindful of economic and social factors at play throughout the high school transition. Lastly, educators should consider interventions to increase availability of supports to students with lower social skills regardless of FRL status, and FRL-receiving students with high social skills.

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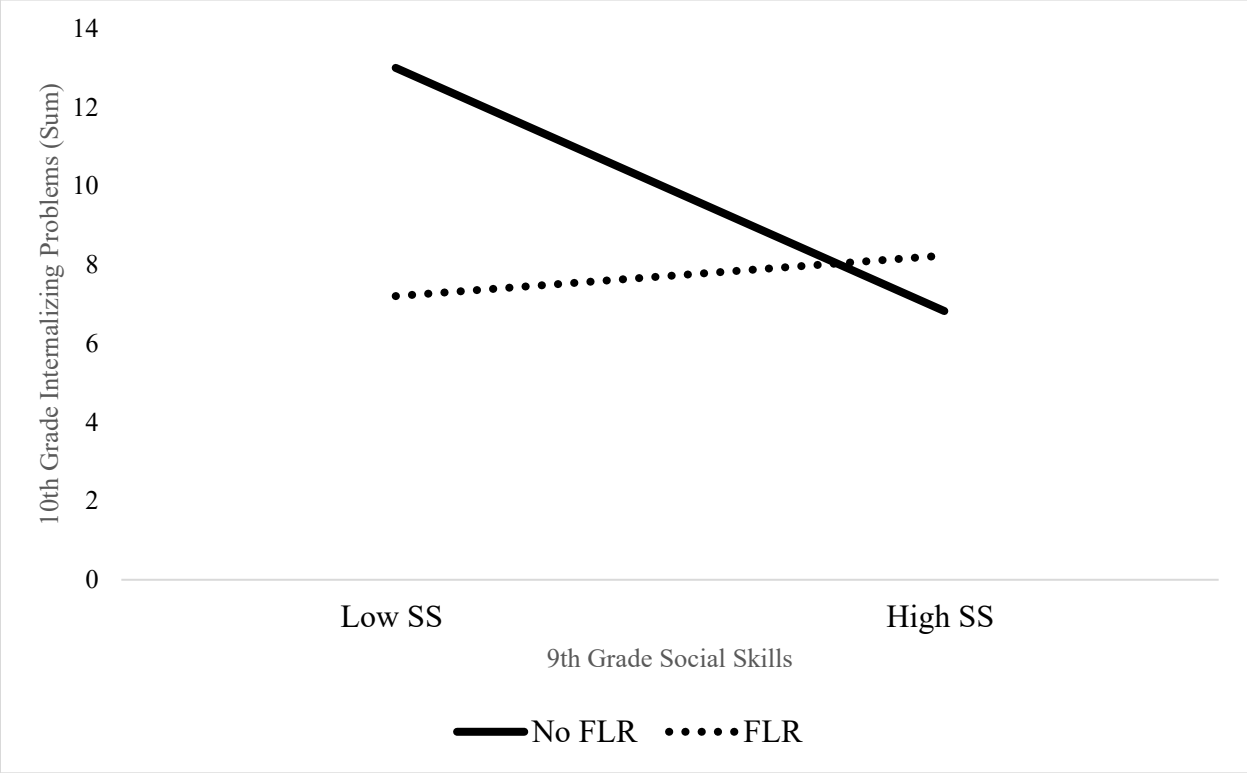
Table 1: Overall Mean Differences Between FRL and Non-FRL Students

	FRL	Non FRL	Significant Tests
Demographics			
Female	52.4%	47.6%	0.040
White	28.8%	71.2%	0.001
Black	58.8%	41.2%	0.001
English Language Learners	90.6%	9.4%	NS
IEP	12.9%	87.1%	0.045
Academics & School Behaviors			
8th Grade: No. of Fs.	0.75	0.28	0.005
8th Grade: No. of Absences	10.90	8.05	0.027
8th Grade: No. of Office Referrals	0.71	0.38	NS
9th Grade: GPA	2.55	3.02	0.001
9th Grade: Attendance	93%	94%	NS
9th Grade: No. of Office Referrals	1.07	0.97	NS
Problem Behaviors			
9th Grade: Externalizing	0.71	0.59	0.017
9th Grade: Bullying	0.40	0.33	NS
9th Grade: Hyperactivity/Inattention	1.02	0.94	NS
10th Grade: Externalizing	0.71	0.63	NS
10th Grade: Bullying	0.50	0.42	NS
10th Grade: Hyperactivity/Inattention	1.05	0.99	NS
Social Skills and Internalizing Problems			
9th Grade: Social Skills	1.81	2.02	0.001
10th Grade: Social Skills	1.97	2.02	NS
9th Grade: Internalizing Problems	0.81	0.79	NS
10th Grade: Internalizing Problems	0.82	0.94	NS

NS: Not significant

Figure 1: Interaction Plot For Social Skills and FRL Status Predicting Internalizing Problems



Supplementary Table 1: Regression Models Predicting 10th Grade Internalizing Problems

	Model 1: Demographics			Model 2: Demographics + Academics and School Behaviors			Model 3: Demographics + Academics and School Behaviors + Problem Behaviors		
	β	SE	Sig	β	SE	Sig	β	SE	Sig
FRL X SS	0.008	0.005	0.132	0.009	0.006	0.168	0.011	0.005	0.047
SS (Centered)	-0.008	0.004	0.022	-0.008	0.004	0.050	-0.005	0.004	0.146
FRL	-0.115	0.108	0.291	-0.138	0.121	0.255	-0.115	0.102	0.264
Female	0.221	0.101	0.029	0.278	0.115	0.017	0.428	0.101	0.001
Black	-0.157	0.132	0.237	-0.299	0.149	0.047	-0.307	0.127	0.017
Asian	0.169	0.154	0.276	0.236	0.179	0.190	0.014	0.156	0.928
Others	-0.290	0.390	0.458	-0.580	0.567	0.308	-0.407	0.474	0.393
ELL	-0.116	0.209	0.579	-0.184	0.238	0.440	0.020	0.204	0.922
IEP	-0.085	0.248	0.733	0.129	0.274	0.640	0.021	0.229	0.928
8th No. Fs				0.061	0.064	0.339	0.002	0.054	0.969
8th No. of Abs Days				-0.013	0.010	0.199	-0.008	0.009	0.377
8th No. of Disc Refs				0.058	0.052	0.265	0.063	0.045	0.157
9th GPA				-0.030	0.077	0.695	-0.005	0.066	0.941
9th Attendance				-0.791	0.975	0.419	-0.525	0.854	0.540
9th No. of Disc Refs				-0.012	0.015	0.449	-0.012	0.013	0.362
9th Externalizing							0.415	0.280	0.142
9th Bullying							-0.105	0.211	0.621
9th Hyperactivity							-0.195	0.158	0.220
10th Externalizing							0.001	0.282	0.999
10Th Bullying							0.076	0.197	0.698
10th Hyperactivity							0.563	0.122	0.001

Influence of Instability on Substance Use Prevalence in Emerging Adult Active Duty Military Members and Veterans

Topaz Lavi

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

Emerging Adults (EA) are found to have the highest rates of substance use across the lifespan. Past research suggests emerging adults who are active duty members, as well as veterans, have an increased likelihood of misusing substances due to the feeling of instability. The Emerging Adulthood Theory (EAT) suggests that individuals ages 18-29 experience five different stages of development known as dimensions: optimism, self-focus, instability, identity exploration, and the feeling of being in between a child and an adult (Arnett, 2000). This paper will discuss instability, one out of the five dimensions of the Emerging Adulthood Theory in relation to military members and how their experiences in the military may influence their substance use. The relationship was found through semi-structured interviews and coding following thematic analysis. These results can also be found in many of the interviews of emerging adult military members conducted for our study. This study also has implications for social work, as it influences social work practice to be more mindful of the differences between emerging adult military members and their civilian counterparts. Without this understanding, it may make it more difficult for social workers to stray away from unconscious biases while working with this population. Unconscious biases can arise due to a lack of cultural competency and understanding of the unique experiences active duty members and veterans face, which can therefore negatively impact the quality of care and support this population may receive from social workers.

Keywords: Emerging Adulthood, Military, Instability, Substance Use

Introduction

Emerging adulthood is thought to be a critical developmental period for individuals ages 18-29 (Arnett, 2000). This time period is explained through five different dimensions the age group may experience: optimism, self-focus, instability, identity exploration, and the feeling of being in between a child and an adult (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adults are also found to have the highest rates of substance use across the lifespan (SAMHSA, 2017). According to Arnett's (2000) theory, emerging adults experience extensive amounts of growth and change throughout

this time period. Not only change within themselves, but regarding their environment as well. Certain changes can vary from moving to a new place, to forming new relationships or losing old ones. Because of these changes, emerging adults can begin to feel an increased sense of instability, which can be understood as uncertainty of the future. Moreover, feeling unstable can cause some individuals to feel as if self-medicating with substances is a viable coping mechanism (Shadur, 2015). This instability could be linked to high rates of substance use in this age range. In addition, this paper will discuss the differences between this dimension as an active duty member versus a veteran and will go further in-depth about instability and how this dimension may influence higher rates of substance use and misuse in emerging adults, specifically in the military.

Methods

The study focuses on exploring Arnett's Emerging Adulthood Theory dimensions in relation to individuals in the military, as well as veterans (Arnett, 2000). This study was conducted through a series of 24 interviews with military members (N=13) and veterans (N=11). Emerging adults with high risk substance use behaviors completed surveys and an in-depth interview regarding their experiences transitioning into adulthood. These dimensions may explain their substance misuse. Throughout the interviews, participants were asked about their lives as an emerging adult before and during the military. In addition, they discussed substance use culture in the military and whether they felt the EAT dimensions applied to their experiences and substance use behaviors. The interviews were then examined following thematic analysis. Thematic analysis follows a six-step process: familiarizing yourself with the data, creating initial codes, finding common themes, reviewing founded themes, defining and naming each theme,

and creating your report (Braun & Clark, 2006). The coding process consisted of a team who would code the transcripts separately using NVivo software, and then come together in order to create and define themes found.

Results

In order to collect the proper information to create the results for the study, interviews as well as outside sources were gathered. Together, they shed a light on the link between the feeling of instability and substance use behaviors. The interviews supported the results by bringing in qualitative data, which allowed for a holistic approach to the study, while the statistics conveyed the analytical portion of the research.

Instability as Active Duty

The adjustment of becoming a military member (N=13), as well as the constant moving and deployments members often experience, could create a sense of instability for these individuals. A participant in one interview explained,

> "Uhm, I mean, instability I would say 100% relates to the military. You know, sure. There was about a two-year period I think where I did not live in one place for more than about six months. You know, just constantly, you know going to different places, especially when I was first starting my career. And then you know, the instability of you know, you get really close to the friend group in one area and then you get told by the military you have to move. So now you gotta go make some new friends somewhere else" (26, Male, Army).

Not having the proper amount of time to adjust to a new setting can be difficult for anyone. Constantly moving to new areas and being forced to leave the friendships can make one feel as if they do not fit in. For many military members, moving away from home for the first time can be a terrifying new chapter. As a military member, the continuous cycle of adapting to new environments can make it more difficult to find a sense of grounding, whereas non-military

emerging adults tend to have more control over when and where they decide to move. Therefore, these experiences can create an even greater sense of instability for emerging adults enlisted in the military.

On the other hand, some participants in the study discussed feeling a greater sense of stability within the military due to the structure and responsibilities provided to their members,

> "But what gave me the feeling of stability was, I am in the military, they are going to provide housing, provide food, and I get paid a lot, and nothing bad is going to happen, like I felt stable, by the time I was leaving the military, ready to go to school, I had money saved up, I had a whole plan, benefits, I struggled with moving, but it is still like I had a safety net, I always felt like there was a safety net for me, yeah, yeah I always felt like the military always gave me some kind of safety net" (25, Male, Marine Corps).

Having a strict schedule every day, as well as expectations to achieve, gave members a sense of purpose, which created a stronger feeling of stability for some.

Substance Use Prevalence for Active Duty Members

Being in the military can come with mass amounts of stress due to a sense of boredom, loneliness, the situations military members are thrown into, and the experience of being so far away from home. The concern around military members misusing alcohol is elevated due to the high rates of psychological distress, and trauma-induced psychological distress from their experiences (Stewart, 1996). Moreover, members become closer to individuals in their unit and begin feeling a sense of brotherhood, which can further influence or exacerbate the military's drinking culture. This idea of brotherhood and belonging is encouraged in order to create a stronger sense of uniformity, which can aid in more successful teamwork within units. However, it can also have negative effects such as increasing the likelihood of risky substance use behaviors due to the pressure to conform. In most branches, binge drinking is prevalent and, in many cases, expected. In a study researching the prevalence of binge drinking while enlisted, 26.8% of men and 12.5% of women in the sample (N=713) fit the category of frequent heavy

drinkers, which was measured by five drinks per occasion for males, and four drinks per occasion for females a minimum of once a week (Moore, 2007). Unfortunately, there are many gaps in research related to patterns of binge drinking linked to gender; therefore, making it difficult to understand why men engage in more binge drinking than women while enlisted. Moreover, one in three service members are binge drinkers and more than one in three service members are hazardous drinkers (NIDA, 2019). A binge drinker is an individual whose drinking may cause temporary physical harm, whereas a hazardous drinker's behaviors can cause more adverse health effects such as alcoholism. Some members feel unstable during active duty due to the constant changing and adapting that occurs while enlisted. For example, moving, deployment, and psychological distress from certain lived experiences. Due to a feeling of instability, mixed with the prevalent military drinking culture, and a desire to feel a sense of belonging, it is common for military members to regularly binge drink as a coping mechanism.

Instability as a Veteran

For all the veterans (N=11) in the study, reintegrating into the civilian world was a time with an increased feeling of instability. After spending years adapting to life in the military, it was time to live a civilian life again, which came with more freedom and much less structure. For veterans without a plan, or ones who could be struggling with mental health problems due to trauma they may have endured while enlisted, a new life without a sense of structure could be extremely difficult to adjust to. One participant explained,

> "But when you get out, and I know a lot of people who do like three-year contracts, when they get out and that is when it gets real unstable, that transition period, and then I think also now that I am starting to think about instability on the weekends, you do not have structure and you have freedom and, uhm, nothing is super stable for the weekend, you do not have a wake up time, a final formation time, and all those kind of things, so I think that is part of it, definitely attributes to that" (22, Male, National Guard & Army).

That transitional period back to civilian life can be extremely unstable due to not only feeling as if one is returning to a prior life, but also seeing how much that life has changed since enlisting. This can vary from relationships, to living situations, as well as the amount of freedom a veteran now holds. Without the structure of the military, service members had become so accustomed to, many begin to feel lost. Since the "safety net" they once had is gone, it becomes difficult to find structure and stability in their lives once again.

Substance Use Prevalence for Veterans

Beginning a new life outside of the military can be stressful and unstable, as exemplified with the above quote regarding life as a veteran. With a strong drinking culture in the military, many individuals have learned and become accustomed to self-medicating through binge drinking. Now, after not learning how to cope in positive ways, many resort to coping in the way they are familiar with, which is through the use of substances. One participant explained their experience returning from deployment,

> "That instability one really speaks out honestly. Yeah, I can definitely say that one.. Yeah. Cause I can tell you right now after I got back [from deployment], I had a few beers just because I was so mad. Yeah, definitely the instability part because I mean I got literally moved around so much and used in so many different places. It was just like at the end of each day, I was just like, oh my god, I'm going to get a beer or something like, crack open a beer and shut off a little" (23, Male, Marine Corps).

Due to growing so accustomed to drinking as a means to cope while enlisted, it can become increasingly difficult to learn more positive coping mechanisms as a veteran. In a study related to veterans and drinking prevalence, it was found approximately half of the women (N= 2,528) and over half of the men (N=21,682) ages 18-25 participating in the study (N= 24,210) reported having binge drank in the past month (Hoggatt, 2017). Without the structure holding veterans accountable, such as a daily schedule and set expectations, as well as an increased sense of instability, it can become significantly easier to cope through substance use.

Further Research Implications

Alcohol has been prevalent in the military for decades. In the 18th and 19th century, drinking rituals within branches were common, and often condoned. Even though alcohol is no longer provided by the military, it continues to be easily accessible through means such as going to bars near ports during members' free time (Shirvani, Reed, & Clingan, 2017). Moreover, the drinking culture in the military instills an idea that coping through substances is an appropriate way to deal with daily struggles. For example, in the Navy, it is common to view drinking with other members as a positive strategy to cope with stress; binge drinking is not necessarily condemned either, as long as members are capable of returning to ship at their designated time (Ames & Cunradi, 2004). Due to the normalization of binge drinking in the military, members often rationalize risky alcohol use behaviors as a means to self-medicate. Engaging in the use of substances as a coping mechanism can contribute to adverse health effects such as addiction. Furthermore, it can also negatively impact an individual's quality of life and may worsen conditions such as depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. Positive coping mechanisms to advocate for instead may be journaling, meditation, or recreational physical activity. Mindfulness practices such as journaling and meditation can help individuals find healthy ways to ground themselves when struggling with stress, boredom, or loneliness. Moreover, recreational physical activity can help relieve stress that may come with the responsibilities the military pushes on their members.

Some gaps were found in research on this population, which were why the prevalence of binge drinking was so much higher among men than women and how gender roles may affect this finding. It is important to find how different lived experiences such as combat exposure, sexual assault, and toxic masculinity may negatively affect the substance use behaviors of

military members and veterans. Without this knowledge, effective treatment for this population may be increasingly difficult to create.

Conclusion

Emerging adulthood is a critical developmental period for individuals. For military members and veterans, the added stress due to constant changes and transitions in and out of the military, along with binge drinking being so commonly normalized, can make it easier to misuse substances, which can later develop into a negative coping method. Moreover, emerging adult veterans and active duty members struggling with a feeling of instability can also lead to risky substance use behaviors. Due to the stressful environment that comes with joining the military, this can be a factor as to why the prevalence of substance use is so high among active duty members and veterans. The use of substances can be a means to cope with the responsibilities and trauma that may come with military experience, as well as the instability that a veteran may feel during their transition back into the civilian world. Lastly, it is critical for social workers to be mindful of these issues when working with active duty members and veterans in this age range. The struggles and transitions they face can be much different than the ones emerging adults in the civilian world have experienced, and it is important to be aware of these differences in order to effectively work with active duty members or veterans.

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